



Veterans Rural Health Resource Centers

National Rural Health Association Annual Meeting
May 6, 2009

Office of Rural Health
Veterans Health Administration
Office of the Assistant Deputy Under Secretary for Health

Overview of Veterans Rural Health Resource Centers (VRHRCs)

- Primary Functions
- VRHRC Locations
- Types of Projects
- Areas of Focus
- Eastern Region: Overview, Portfolio and Final Products
- Western Region: Overview, Portfolio and Final Products
- Central Region: Overview, Portfolio and Final Products



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Primary Functions

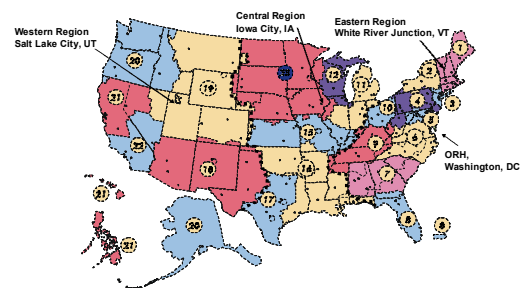
- Conduct policy oriented studies and analyses
 - Synthesize into technical and non-technical reports
 - Develop and disseminate products in consultation with Office of Rural Health (ORH) and other decision makers
- Function as field-based clinical laboratories for policy relevant pilot projects and concomitant evaluations
 - Provide consultation and technical assistance to the field for pilot projects
 - Includes Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Centers (VAMCs), Community Based Outreach Clinics (CBOCs) and other VA facilities
 - Concept paper development, drafting requests for proposals and obtaining approval and funding



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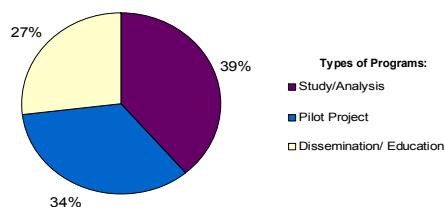
VRHRC Locations



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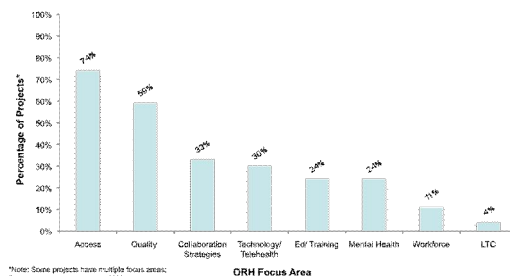
Types of Projects



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Areas of Focus



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Eastern Region (ER) Overview

- White River Junction, Vermont VAMC (VISN 1)
 - Director: Ryan Lilly, MPA
 - Deputy Director: Alan West, PhD
- Key Partners include:
 - North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System
 - Upstate New York Healthcare Systems
 - Dartmouth Medical School
 - University of Southern Maine Muskie School of Government
- Areas of Focus:
 - Access
 - Workforce



ER Project Portfolio

- Access:
 - Access to evidence-based treatments for neurologically-impaired rural Veterans
 - Access to treatment and outcomes for Veterans with substance abuse disorders
 - Rural Veterans' perceptions of their access to care
 - VAMC chief of staff perceptions of rural access to care
- Innovative Care Delivery:
 - Telephone care as a substitute for routine psychiatric medication management
 - Utilization of mobile clinics as an alternative care delivery model for rural areas
 - Community-based facilities to provide VA telemental health



ER Project Portfolio

- Quality:
 - Longitudinal health-related quality-of-life and survival among rural versus urban Veterans
- Education and Information Repository:
 - Rural Veterans research repository
 - National telehealth inventory
 - Symposium on Rural Health Challenges: Access, Ethics, Delivery and Technology
- Other Topics:
 - Examination of VA's urban/rural/highly rural designations
 - Policy implications for different definitions of rural
 - Ethics of rural healthcare practice



ER Final Products

- Sample of Products:
 - Policy reports, issue briefs and journal articles
 - Phone based telehealth intervention to address depression and chronic illness
 - Program evaluation toolkit
 - Web content relating to rural health literature
- Dissemination Strategies:
 - Internal reports to ORH
 - Utilize and leverage dissemination partners
 - Presentations to VA and non-VA medical providers, administrators and other stakeholders



Western Region (WR) Overview

- Salt Lake City, Utah VAMC (VISN 19)
 - Director: Bryon Bair, MD
 - Deputy Director: Nancy Dailey, MSN, RN-BC
- Key partners include:
 - VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System
 - University of Utah
 - Brigham Young University
- Areas of Focus:
 - Technology
 - Access
 - Collaboration



WR Project Portfolio

- Technology:
 - Telepsychiatry clinics for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse
 - Culturally-centric home telehealth programs
 - Web-based caregiver support for Veterans with cognitive disorders
 - Symptom-based home telehealth protocol
- Access:
 - Understanding Veterans' service options and utilization patterns for PTSD
 - Baseline survey assessing healthcare needs, perceived barriers to service and service disparities
 - Taxonomy of rural community types and associated characteristics



WR Project Portfolio (cont.)

- Collaboration:
 - Four Corners Telehealth Conference
 - Creation of an infrastructure for Native populations focus
 - Partnership with three rural communities for development of outreach clinics
 - Identification of community and inter-agency resources within Veteran Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) to build synergistic care delivery models



WR Final Products

- Sample of Products:
 - Geriatric collaborative program operations manual
 - Networking maps between VA and non-VA partners
 - Interactive website for all interested customers
- Dissemination Strategies:
 - Technology-based sharing: websites, webinars and "Live Meeting"
 - Community partnerships and collaborations
 - Targeted conference presentations
 - Publication in peer-reviewed scholarly journals
 - VISN and station-level strategic planning groups



Central Region (CR) Overview

- Iowa City, Iowa VAMC (VISN 23)
 - Director: Peter, Kaboli, MD
 - Deputy Director: Recruiting for deputy director position
- Key partners include:
 - Fargo, Omaha and Minneapolis VAMCs
 - University of North Dakota, Center for Rural Health
 - University of Nebraska, RUPRI Center for Rural Health Policy Analysis
 - University of Minnesota, Rural Health Research Center
- Areas of Focus:
 - Access
 - Workforce



CR Project Portfolio

- Innovative Care Delivery:
 - Telephone-Based Telehealth Intervention for Diabetes, Hypertension and Chronic Pain (Iowa City)
- Quality:
 - "Are CBOCs Improving Care for Chronically Ill Rural Veterans?" (Minneapolis)
 - Potentially Preventable Hospital Readmission Among Rural Veterans (Grand Forks/Fargo)
- Access:
 - Creating Patient-Centered Medical Homes for Rural Veterans (Omaha)



CR Final Products

- Sample of Products:
 - "How to" manuals (e.g. Successful Strategies for Improving Access and Quality of Care for Rural Veterans)
 - Reports, issues briefs, fact sheets and journal articles
 - Presentations at National VA and non-VA conferences
- Dissemination Strategies:
 - Contribute content to VA ORH website
 - Electronic newsletter
 - Leverage key dissemination partners
 - Continue engagement with VISN Rural Health Consultants and funded rural health initiatives

